

Best teachers fêted at Learning Festival

The accomplishments of George Brown's best 20 teachers were celebrated during the recent Festival of Learning. The top teachers were invited to a special lunch where they discussed teaching with experts who had just participated in a panel discussion during the two-day professional development event. They were chosen by having the highest scores on classroom performance questions on student feedback questionnaires during spring and fall 2008 semesters.

The best teachers are (in alphabetical order):

Louie Biondello – CSHS (contract faculty)

Mandy Bonisteel – CSHS

Maxine Brown – ECE

Louisa Burgess-Corbett

Stevan Ciric – Gen Ed and Access (contract faculty)

Jennifer Cooke – Nursing

Peter Dederer – Technology

Cheryl Dyson – Business Arts and Design (contract faculty)

Judith Ercolino – CSHS

Ian Grady – Hospitality and Tourism

Gillian Johnston – CSHS

Noreen McGibney Business Arts and Design

Nicki Monahan – CSHS

Diane Moore – CSHS

Andrea Olynyk – Hospitality and Tourism (contract faculty)

Mario Pasucci – Business Arts and Design

James Simon – Theatre School

Anne-Marie Stoneburgh – Health Sciences

Dorothy Ward – (Theatre School)

Connie Winder – ECE

The Festival of Learning attracted a record 400 staff to dozens of sessions that ranged from serious discussions of the college's academic strategy and debates about academic integrity to a purely entertaining side show with a dunk tank and nail bar.

Staff Development Director Bob Cox says the success of the event was due to hard work by his team who created a program that appealed to staff for the right reasons. "You have to offer a program that people see as valuable to them and it's got to be high quality."



IT'S ONE OF A KIND – Second year Jewellery Arts student Yuliya Chorna shows off a ring for sale at the college's booth at the spring One of a Kind Show at the Direct Energy Centre in early April. The gold and resin ring, created by graduate Wendy Hung, was among the student and alumni work on sale from \$40 to more than \$5,000. But the goal of the booth wasn't just to make sales. Planning and running it was a practical lesson for students in the Craft Show Management course taught by Shona Kearney. "The whole course is about how to get yourself in a show," Kearney says. Students had to plan the booth, put it up and take it down, pick items for sale, and take turns staffing the show. The booth also featured some jewellery created for sale at the annual graduate show, which runs from April 16 to May 10 at Bounty Contemporary Craft and Design shop at Harbourfront Centre.

All staff to be trained to work with people with disabilities

George Brown is preparing to train all staff to respond appropriately to the more than 1 in 10 students and staff who identify as persons with a disability.

While the college has a Disability Services Department to help students, and many staff have educated themselves to work with people with disabilities, starting this fall all college staff will be trained to enhance their customer services skills and ensure persons with disabilities have access to all services within our college.

The training effort – to meet requirements of provincial legislation – will likely involve staff spending an hour or less completing online courses or reading material. For the purposes of this training, staff will be broadly-defined to include anyone representing the college even for short periods of time, including part-time, contract workers and volunteers.

"Everyone will be trained on how to provide customer service to persons with disabilities – from the president to volunteers," says Olga Dosis, co-ordinator of George Brown's Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

The AODA, passed by Queen's Park in 2005, mandates training by January 2010 to teach employees and others how to respond appropriately to people with disabilities. The legislation mandates physical access for physically disabled people using wheelchairs or other mobility devices – but that's just the beginning. It includes disabilities that are invisible, such as learning disabilities, mental health disabilities, or persons who identify as Deaf, deafened, hard of hearing, ASL or LSQ users, as well as disabilities that are temporary – which may be as a result of aging, illness or injury.

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Grad helps creates circus magic

Most of us watch circus performers do death defying feats and ask ourselves in amazement: "How do they do that?"

Well, George Brown Fitness and Lifestyle graduate Linda Evans knows. As the coach of a circus school and professional circus company in Toronto she knows exactly how much practice, sweat and tears goes into making the seemingly impossible look so easy.

"The development of circus skills requires a strong balance in all areas of fitness – cardiovascular endurance, power, agility, balance, muscular strength and endurance, flexibility and co-ordination – making it a wonderfully challenging endeavor."

Evans never dreamed of running away to join the circus and didn't even work in that direction when she graduated in 1990. But her career path – from

fitness consultant to fitness director and personal trainer – eventually led her 10 years ago to the Toronto School of Circus Arts in Downsview, where she is now administrator and coach of the school and its associated 15-person professional company – Cirque Sublime.

"I never thought of myself as an artistic type of individual – many feel circus is all about artistry – I soon realized that the development of circus skills is very technical and matched very well with my own mindset and over the years I have learned to tap into my artistic side! It has been an exciting and constantly challenging career."

While she offers muscle conditioning and flexibility coaching for a variety of circus skills her specialty is helping people perform acrobatic and dance-like routines high above the circus floor on thin bands of cloth – called aerial silks – suspended from the roof.

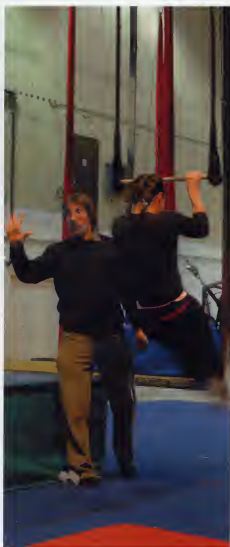
"One of the most challenging circus apparatus to develop on is aerial silks," she says.

Circus skills may be challenging but they are attainable by the general public – 120 of whom take classes at the school for fitness – and fun. "Absolutely anyone can learn circus skills, there are no prerequisites required except a desire to challenge oneself and have fun with your training."

Evans also maintains a connection to George Brown – offering current third year Fitness and Lifestyle students a practical seminar in circus skills as part of their Biomechanics and Ergonomics course. On a recent visit, and with the help of two performers, she presented a series of techniques on the silks, trapeze, and hoop.

But the students weren't there just to gawk – they had to do a technical analysis of the performers movements – translating circus magic into laws of physics, says program co-ordinator John Griffin.

"After watching a performer do some acrobatic maneuvers on a large hoop the fitness students



Fitness and Lifestyle Management professor John Griffin demonstrates a biomechanical point on a student visit to the Toronto School of Circus Arts.

applied a model of qualitative analysis to evaluate and explain the movements from a biomechanical perspective. We discussed these questions: What were the directions of force applications? Which were internal versus external forces? Which of Newton's Laws applied? How did the performer change the angular motion when she touched the ground?"

"With helpful insights from the performers and feedback from Linda we entered into a cooperative problem-solving session to help us understand how the athletes were able to achieve their movements. Whether it was a heel-hang demonstrating leverage and stability or a hand-over-hand helicopter on the silks showing how impulse can generate changes in momentum, the opportunity to apply our biomechanical principles was a close second to the respect and amazement earned by the performers."

What advice would Evans give current Fitness students? "Be adventurous, your education does not stop once you receive your diploma. The application of your knowledge does not have to be focused only in mainstream fitness/sports."



George Brown graduate Linda Evans is administrator and coach at the Toronto School of Circus Arts and Cirque Sublime professional circus company.

Working with people with disabilities (continued from page 1)

Right now an estimated 13 per cent of Ontario's population self-identify as having disabilities, but that figure is expected to grow to as much as 20 per cent as the population ages in the coming decades, says Dosis. The goal of training is to make the education and services George Brown offers accessible to everyone.

"We need to ensure that respect, dignity and equality of opportunity is maintained for persons with disabilities," Dosis says.

The legislation doesn't require the college to have all its staff trained by January 2010 – but to show training is underway and that it has plans to train everyone. "We have to report back every year," says Dosis.

For more information about how George Brown has been preparing for the current and forthcoming regulations of the AODA visit http://www.georgebrown.ca/AODA/terms_of_reference.aspx#top

New Waterfront Executive Director is expert in sustainable building

George Brown's new Executive Director of Waterfront Development is committed to creating sustainable and environmentally-friendly buildings for our new campus. Terry Comeau is a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) accredited Canadian architect with close to 30 years of international experience in Canada as well as the Middle East and Gulf regions.

Comeau is a sustainability advocate and a LEED Accredited Professional, having passed the accreditation exam given by the U.S. Green Building Certification Institute. She will help George Brown's project team create a sustainable energy and environmental design for the new campus.

George Brown is aiming to create a waterfront campus that meets the rigorous LEED Gold Standard – the second highest level possible for sustainability. Over the past 12 years, Comeau has held progressive planning, design and project development positions with the international firms Consult Maunsell AECOM and HOK Canada. Just a few of the projects Terry has worked on include:

- Dubai Marina, an award-winning \$4 billion (US) resort and recreation waterfront community, subject of a Discovery Channel Frontiers of Construction

program for innovative waterfront planning; Terry directed the competition and execution of the project for the first 18 months of implementation;

- Toronto Eastern Port Lands Film Studio – Two Development Bids with Pinewood Shepperton Studios, over a six year period;
- Al Khor Waterfront Development, a 7.2 square kilometre new city development within a proposed Man in the World Biosphere site in the State of Qatar; Comeau won the competition and acted as Project Director over a two year period;
- Nortel Networks High Technology Campus Developments across Canada;
- Comeau directed the Canadian team during the master planning phase of the Toronto University Health Network/Four Hospital Mega-Consolidation Project, worth \$350 million.

Comeau's overall role is to provide leadership to the Waterfront Campus team, ensuring the effective implementation of the team's planning, design, and development vision. She will be working closely with Lorie Shekter-Wolfson, Dean, Community Services and Health Sciences, who has the major



Terry Comeau, George Brown's new Executive Director of Waterfront Development, is an expert in "green" building practices.

leadership role in the development of the new health sciences centre with an emphasis on inter-professional education.

Terry reports to Eugene Harrigan, Vice-President, Corporate Services.



GIRLS' NIGHT OUT WINE FUNDS BURSARY – Thousands of women across Ontario recently found another reason to enjoy a glass of wine together - helping female hospitality students at George Brown pay for their education. In a program it called Girls Helping Girls, the winery that makes Girls' Night Out – Colio Estate Wines – donated 25 cents for every Girls' Night Out bottle sold. It then split the proceeds among four Ontario colleges, including George Brown. Colio recently donated \$7,151 from sales of the wine to establish a bursary fund here that, thanks to a government matching program, is now worth more than \$14,300. Here Colio Estate Vice-President Doug Beatty, holding the cheque, is joined by (from left) President Anne Sado, Centre for Hospitality and Culinary Arts Dean John Walker, Hospitality Management professor Adrian Caravello, George Brown College Foundation Director Darlene Norris, and Chef School Director John Higgins.



NEW STAFF AWARD – Preeti Shehrawat, a part-time data base administrator with the Alumni Relations Department, is the first recipient of the newly created Count on Me Award, which comes with temporary guardianship of this richly decorated trophy. She was given the Award by her colleagues for her heroic efforts in sorting out 15,000 duplicate entries in the alumni database. "The Count on Me Award acknowledges employees who are especially collaborative, innovative, positive and reliable," says Alumni director Janice Howard. Shehrawat's job is now to find a deserving colleague and pass the award and trophy along.

President Anne Sado



Last month I was invited to speak at a symposium about post-secondary education and economic competitiveness hosted by the Swiss Chamber of Commerce, entitled "War for Talent." Suffice it to say, when it came to the topics of post-secondary options and career preparedness, there were a number of interesting and divergent views expressed!

In my presentation, I discussed the evolution of post-secondary education from a system designed originally for a small elite group to a system that is now fundamental to personal and professional achievement for all members of our community. The unique role and position of colleges within Ontario's post-secondary education system has certainly been at the core of that evolution. I shared with the audience the importance of delivering skilled graduates to support the competitiveness of our industries, and the need for a more college-centric approach, among government and industry, to address the challenges of providing a rich pool of skilled labour in the future.

To achieve this, the Province must continue to re-evaluate the current educational funding model and seek to evolve it to a model that supports the largest population of students in acquiring the advanced skills a healthy economy needs. We need to provide greater mobility between universities and colleges while recognizing the merits of both – a shift that would reshape a post-secondary system to produce successful graduates in the most efficient possible manner, rather than relying on selection of only the best and the brightest.

For George Brown, and other Ontario colleges, this should sound like a familiar concept. That's because the idea of nurturing excellence, starting with the broadest possible pool of students, is based on the same underlying principles as our own mandate to further the cause of access to education. Indeed, the systemic changes I suggested at the symposium would ultimately be a broader implementation of what we are already doing at the individual college level in terms of providing a welcoming environment for all, while ensuring our graduates meet the high standards of our programs.

As with any audience, however, there were some who would interpret the idea of access to be in conflict with reaching the highest levels of excellence. In fact, I have come across discussions at George Brown which have placed Access and Academic Excellence – two of our highest priorities – at odds. This perceived conflict is, quite simply, false.

As a community college, we are committed to living up to the expectation of providing access as a means for social progress. At the same time, our promise to our industry stakeholders requires us to meet the demands of employers for the highest possible levels of excellence in our graduates. Doing both does not necessarily imply compromise, but it does require a special approach.

George Brown's success in both Access and Academic Excellence is based on fusing the two together. By placing students in the right programs and academic pathways for them, and then providing customized supports while maintaining rigorous academic standards and final outcomes, the College has been able to build excellence while furthering access.

The other crucial factor to facilitate this approach is providing the necessary pathways prior to entrance into their chosen career program – like in the Centre for Preparatory & Liberal Studies or special programs designed to raise academic qualifications for unique, underserved populations. GBC also has advisement services to help prospective students apply to program areas where they are most likely to succeed. We are continually developing innovative ways to support students so that they will complete their program and graduate with the unique strength and skills they require to succeed in their first job. Examples include: helping faculty develop new ways of teaching that respond to the different

learning needs of students; on-going academic support through peer tutors; specialized remedial courses; focused student support groups and Early alert strategies to support struggling student early in their program.

By combining all of these key ingredients, my hope is that we will succeed not only in helping a broader population of students, but also in demonstrating the value of access for the post-secondary system. As long as we discard the view of Access and Academic Excellence as separate pieces to be balanced, we will continue to meet our commitments to both, and to build something greater than the sum of its parts.

GREEN SPOT

This month's Green Spot is from Andrew Johnson of the Centre for Hospitality and Culinary Arts (CHCA):

It's really easy to save a quarter of a million sheets of paper! In CHCA we used to print out a course outline for every student in every new class. We no longer do. But students still get to see them. They're all up on college website. Many profs also post the course outline on the WebCT page for their class.

This semester alone, we've saved 127,000 sheets of paper. In a year we save over a quarter of a million pages. If every department tried this... no excuses... if we made a team effort... how much paper, how many toner cartridges, how much energy, how much time and effort could we save???

To see our course outlines are posted online go to www.georgebrown.ca/courseoutlines/index.aspx#top



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